How Do Community Health Workers Contribute to Better Nutrition?

Institutionalizing Community Health Conference 2017, South Africa
March 2017

Sascha Lamstein, PhD
Technical Advisor and "Systems Thinking for Nutrition" Team Lead
SPRING
If you weren’t sure why the **focus** on nutrition...

In 2014, there were 667 million children under 5 in the world. An estimated:

- 159 million were stunted
- 41 million were overweight
- 50 million were wasted

(each pair of children represents 20 million children)


**Nutrition-related factors contribute to about 45% of deaths in children under 5 years of age.**  
― Black et al. 2013
Globally, nutrition-related health issues persist.

According to most recent data, **stunting** remains a major challenge.

- 1995: 36%
- 2000: 33%
- 2005: 29%
- 2010: 26%
- 2015: 23%

Anemia also persists as a major problem for children.

- 2007: 44%
- 2008: 44%
- 2009: 43%
- 2010: 43%
- 2011: 43%

**29%** of women of reproductive age have anemia (2011)

Only **43%** of infants are exclusively breastfed for 6 months (2015)

Source: World Bank Databank: UNICEF
Health and nutrition are inextricably linked

Inadequate dietary intake
Malnutrition

Impaired absorption
Decreased barrier function

Decreased immune function

Rise in infection / disease incidence, severity, and duration
We know evidence-based, cost-effective interventions can improve nutrition outcomes.

It is estimated that the following 10 evidence-based, nutrition-specific interventions, if scaled to 90 percent coverage, could reduce stunting by 20 percent and severe wasting by 60 percent.

- Management of severe acute malnutrition
- Preventive zinc supplementation
- Promotion of breastfeeding
- Appropriate complementary feeding
- Management of moderate acute malnutrition
- Peri-conceptual folic acid supplementation or fortification
- Maternal balanced energy protein supplementation
- Maternal multiple micronutrient supplementation
- Vitamin A supplementation
- Maternal calcium supplementation

Source: Bhutta et al. 2013.
We also know nutrition-sensitive interventions that can indirectly affect nutritional status.

But nutrition-sensitive interventions are less well defined and more context-specific than nutrition-specific interventions

- Agriculture and food security including availability, economic access, and use of food
- Social safety nets
- Child protection
- Access to and use of health services, a safe and hygienic environment
- Classroom education
- Health and family planning services
- Early child development, including feeding and caregiving resources (maternal, household, and community levels)

Health workers play a critical role in providing these proven, evidence-based, cost-effective interventions.
Session Overview

1. Nutrition Workforce Mapping Toolkit
2. CHW Advocacy Toolkit
3. Raising the Status and Quality of Nutrition Services within Government Systems
4. A Recipe for Nutrition
Which cadres of health workers and how many of each...

- Are mandated to provide nutrition services?
- Are trained to provide nutrition services?
- Are supported in providing nutrition services?
- Actually provide nutrition services?
1. Nutrition Workforce Mapping Toolkit
Nutrition Workforce Mapping Process

1. Identify a person to lead the mapping assessment
2. Adapt methods and tools
3. Form / orient assessment teams
4. Pre-test tools
5. Collect data at various levels
6. Analyze and use the data
Nutrition Workforce Mapping

Indicators Measured

- Number Approved & Available
- Qualifications
- Responsibilities
- Training (pre-service & In-service)
- Job Description
- Nutrition Actions Usually Performed

National Level
District Level
Facility Level
Provider Level
Nutrition Workforce Mapping

Tables and Charts

1. Responsibility, Performance, and Training for Nutrition Actions
   • by cadre
   • according to various key informants
2. Total Number of Workers by Cadre
3. Total Number of Trained Workers by Cadre
2. CHW Advocacy Toolkit

- We collaborated with the Advancing Partners and Communities (APC) project’s wider effort to update their Community Health Systems Catalog.
- With input from SPRING, they explored the role of CHWs in providing nutrition services.
- We developed this with information collected by APC.

How Do Community Health Workers Contribute to Better Nutrition?
Zambia
Community health workers provide services in **multiple health service delivery areas**.

- Family planning
- Maternal and child health
- Integrated community case management
- STIs and HIV/AIDS
- Nutrition
- Malaria
- Tuberculosis
- Immunization
- Water and sanitation

**How is nutrition managed for CHWs?**

- Is a national CHW training curriculum available?
- Is nutrition included in the training curriculum?
- Is nutrition in the job description of CHWs?
Community health workers can provide **up to 38** nutrition services.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group</th>
<th>Services</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Adolescents</td>
<td><img src="image" alt="的服务图标" /></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pregnant women</td>
<td><img src="image" alt="的服务图标" /></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Breastfeeding women</td>
<td><img src="image" alt="的服务图标" /></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Newborns</td>
<td><img src="image" alt="的服务图标" /></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Children</td>
<td><img src="image" alt="的服务图标" /></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All stages of life</td>
<td><img src="image" alt="的服务图标" /></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Community health workers can provide between 14 and 35 of those nutrition services in countries studied, according to policy.

- 14 out of 15 countries examined include nutrition in national training curriculum for CHWs.
- 14 out of 24 national nutrition policies reviewed reference CHWs and their role in providing nutrition services.
But this doesn’t tell us...

- What CHWs are actually doing

- What CHWs need to provide quality nutrition services

- What others are doing in the community that might complement, reinforce, or undermine what CHWs are doing for nutrition
3. Raising the Status and Quality of Nutrition Services

Bringing about meaningful change in the delivery of nutrition services will require a systematic and sustainable change process.
That addresses the factors known to affect performance.
4. A **Recipe** for Nutrition

Helps clarify which frontline workers help families with which of these “ingredients”.

CHWs have help!